

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LA PAZ 03700 170127Z

ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 L-03 H-01 /026 W

-----170129Z 030833 /55

O 170105Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5318

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LA PAZ 3700

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TODMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, BL

SUBJ: REPLY TO LETTER ON U.S. PRISONERS FROM MEMBERS
OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING BE INCORPORATED IN YOUR REPLY TO
LETTER OF MAY 12 ON U.S. PRISONERS FROM SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

2. YOUR CONCERN OVER THE AMERICANS IMPRISONED IN BOLIVIA
IS SHARED BY ME, BY THE STAFF OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT
AND BY THE U.S. EMBASSY AT LA PAZ.

3. YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT PRIOR TO JANUARY OF THIS YEAR
THERE WAS IN EFFECT A BOLIVIAN NARCOTICS LAW WHICH
PROVIDED EXTREMELY SEVERE SENTENCES FOR BOTH POSSESSION
AND TRAFFICKING. ANTICIPATING A NEW AND LESS HARSH
NARCOTICS LAW MOST PRISONERS AND THEIR ATTORNEYS DID NOT
PRESS IN 1975-76 FOR PROMPT TRIALS.

4. UPON PROMULGATION OF THE NEW LAW ON JANUARY 25, THE
SITUATION CHANGED, SENTENCES FOR POSSESSION WERE REDUCED
TO A MORE REASONABLE 2-8 YEARS AND OUR EMBASSY BEGAN
AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO EXPEDITE THE TRIAL HEARINGS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LA PAZ 03700 170127Z

FOR THE U.S. PRISONERS. AMBASSADOR STEDMAN, CONSUL
MILBURN AND OTHERS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF HAVE BEEN INVOLVED
IN INTENSE AND CONSTANT EFFORT WITH BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES TO SPEED
UP THE TRIAL, TALKS HAVE BEEN HELD WITH PRESIDENT BANZER,
CABINET MEMBERS, THE SUBSECRETARY OF JUSTICE AND OTHERS
AS A RESULT OF WHICH THE NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF HEARINGS
HAS BEEN GREATLY INCREASED. IN ONE CASE INVOLVING FOUR

AMERICANS, SENTENCE HAS BEEN PASSED AND IS BEING REVIEWED BY THE DISTRICT COURT. ONE AMERICAN, MICHELLE FRYER, HAS BEEN RELEASED FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE, AND THREE OR FOUR OTHER CASES INVOLVING A NUMBER OF THE OTHER U.S. PRISONERS ARE IN THEIR FINAL STAGES.

5. IT IS CORRECT THAT AT THE TIME OF THEIR ARREST, A FEW PRISONERS WERE SUBJECT TO MISTREATMENT AND BEATINGS WITHOUT THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE. SUCH INCIDENTS HAVE NOT BEEN REPEATED FOR MANY MONTHS AND WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS OR COMPLAINTS THAT PHYSICAL ABUSE IS NOW OCCURRING. MEDICAL AND DENTAL TREATMENT IN BOLIVIAN PRISONS IS NORMALLY DEFICIENT OR NON-EXISTENT BUT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN PERMISSION FOR U.S. PRISONERS TO LEAVE THE PRISONS FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL TREATMENT WHEN REQUESTED BY THE PRISONERS. SUCH PERMISSION HAS BEEN MUCH MORE READILY FORTHCOMING IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS AS A RESULT OF PRESSURE AND REPRESENTATION BY OUR CONSUL AND OTHER STAFF MEMBERS.

6. THE PRISONERS ARE VISITED REGULARLY, USUALLY TWICE A WEEK BY CONSULAR OFFICERS; MORE OFTEN IF THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT A PRISONER IS TROUBLED. PRISONERS ARE ALSO ABLE TO ASK THE CONSULS TO COME AND SEE THEM IF THEY HAVE A SPECIAL REQUEST OR PROBLEM. IN ADDITION, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STAFF AND OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN LA PAZ, SUCH AS MISSIONARIES AND TEACHERS AT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL VISIT THE PRISONERS REGULARLY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LA PAZ 03700 170127Z

7. DURING HIS VISIT TO LA PAZ THIS WEEK, ASST. SECRETARY TODMAN DISCUSSED THIS SITUATION WITH THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS OF THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT AND WITH AMBASSADOR STEDMAN AND MEMBERS OF OUR EMBASSY STAFF. HE ASSURES ME OF HIS CONVICTION THAT THE AMBASSADOR, CONSUL MILBURN AND THE EMBASSY STAFF AS A WHOLE HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING WITH THEIR RESOURCES TO SPEED UP JUDICIAL PROCEDURES AND TO ASSURE THE WELFARE OF THE PRISONERS.

8. YOU MAY BE SURE THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE THIS MATTER THE CLOSEST ATTENTION AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT TOWARD A PROMPT RESOLUTION OF THE CASES OF ALL THE U.S. PRISONERS. STEDMAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LEGISLATIVE MAIL, PRISONERS WELFARE, TRIALS, DRUG SEIZURES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAPAZ03700
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770174-0027
Format: TEL
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770549/aaaabqmx.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 93843d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2489968
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPLY TO LETTER ON U.S. PRISONERS FROM MEMBERS OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
TAGS: CASC, PGOV, SNAR, BL, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/93843d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009